

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A ring Ring binder mechanism comprising:

~~with~~ a housing (10) having a C- or U-shaped cross-section with spring-elastic bendable flanks (28), ~~for~~

two carrier rails (20), which carrier rails on their inward facing longitudinal edges lie against each other forming a linkage axis (22) and with their outward facing longitudinal edges (24) engage in mounting grooves (26) in the housing flanks (28), and

~~with~~ at least two half-rings (16) longitudinally spaced apart from each other and rigidly connected with the carrier rails (20), which half-rings extend through openings (12) in a housing wall (13) and pairwise form a ring (14),

wherein the carrier rails (20) are limitedly pivotable relative to each other about the linkage axis (22) between an open position and a closed position upon overcoming the spring forced produced by the bending open of the housing flanks (28), while taking along the half-rings (16), and

wherein at least two locking elements (32) are provided to be operable via an actuating element (18) and a tie rod (44) which locking elements, in the closed position, protrude into a free space (34) formed between

the carrier rails (20) and the housing wall (13) blocking the pivot movement of the carrier rails (20) and, in the open position, free the pivot movement of the carrier rails (20) about the linkage axis (22), wherein the locking elements (32) are pre-tensioned in the direction of the closed position under the influence of a closing spring (36), ~~thereby characterized, that~~ and wherein the tie rod (44) includes a number of engaging elements, preferably dogs (210), each of which respectively being associated with one of the locking elements (32).

2. (currently amended) The ring ~~Ring~~ binder mechanism according to claim 1, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein the tie rod (44) is a piece of wire extending essentially parallel to the linkage axis.
3. (currently amended) The ring ~~Ring~~ binder mechanism according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein the dogs (201) are bends or offsets (202) on the tie rod (44).
4. (currently amended) The ring ~~Ring~~ binder mechanism according to claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 through 3~~, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein each ring element (32) is provided with its own locking spring (36) independent of the tie rod (44).

5. (currently amended) The ring Ring binder mechanism according to claim 4, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein the locking springs (36) are leg springs.
6. (currently amended) The ring Ring binder mechanism according to claim 1 ~~one of claims 1 through 3~~, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein only one locking spring (36) is provided, namely engaging the end of the tie rod (44) opposite to the actuating element (18).
7. (currently amended) The ring Ring binder mechanism according to claim 1 ~~claims 1 through 6~~, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein each locking element (32) includes a receptacle (203) for the corresponding dog (201) of the tie rod (44) and is in operative association therewith.
8. (currently amended) The ring Ring binder mechanism according to claim 1 ~~claims 1 through 7~~, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein at least one of the locking elements (32) is a pivot element.
9. (currently amended) The ring Ring binder mechanism according to claim 8, ~~thereby characterized, that~~ wherein at least one locking element (32) is held pivotably on one of the two carrier rails (20) and/or on the housing (10).

10. (currently amended) A binder ~~Binder~~ with a ring binder mechanism ~~according to one of claims 1 through 9~~ comprising:

a housing (10) having a C- or U-shaped cross-section with spring-elastic bendable flanks (28),

two carrier rails (20), which carrier rails on their inward facing longitudinal edges lie against each other forming a linkage axis (22), their outward facing longitudinal edges (24) engage in mounting grooves (26) in the housing flanks (28),

at least two half-rings (16) longitudinally spaced apart from each other and rigidly connected with the carrier rails (20), which half-rings extend through openings (12) in a housing wall (13) and pairwise form a ring (14),

wherein the carrier rails (20) are limitedly pivotable relative to each other about the linkage axis (22) between an open position and a closed position upon overcoming the spring forced produced by the bending open of the housing flanks (28), while taking along the half-rings (16), and

wherein at least two locking elements (32) are provided to be operable via an actuating element (18) and a tie rod (44) which locking elements, in the closed position, protrude into a free space (34) formed between the carrier rails (20) and the housing wall (13) blocking the pivot movement of the carrier rails (20) and, in the open position, free the pivot movement of the carrier rails

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(20) about the linkage axis (22), wherein the locking elements (32) are pre-tensioned in the direction of the closed position under the influence of a closing spring (36), and wherein the tie rod (44) includes a number of engaging elements, preferably dogs (210), each of which respectively being associated with one of the locking elements (32).